

ful—and not as hitherto a suspicion of passing the buck. The buck now stops with me.

I would commend this development of group practice to all those partnerships who have iatrogenic problems.

E. THEO GRIFFITHS

General Practitioners' Unit,
The Health Centre,
Risca,
Monmouthshire.

Sir,

In the *Daily Mail* of 7 August 1972 an article by John Stevenson, Medical Correspondent, states you published a report by an American-trained business efficiency-expert, Mr Frank Honigsbaum, saying that the average general practitioner maintains a badly equipped surgery and fails to spend adequate time examining his patients. I would like to know what it is Mr Honigsbaum knows about treating patients and running a surgery.

Here in Cornwall we have an excellent service and our doctors ... are excellent, kind and thoughtful to their patients, especially one, whose life is dedicated to his work. How dare our English doctors be insulted by an American businessman?

... We in Cornwall are very happy with our doctors and other services and want doctors *over 40 years old* as they are more reliable. So do not judge all by some of your big towns and cities of mixed races of doctors. Tell John Stevenson to stop printing sensational headings about doctors on the front page of the *Daily Mail*. A word about the secretaries at the surgery—they work hard and show great patience and they have to deal with difficult patients at times. I am writing to the Editor of the *Daily Mail* to complain.

E. TYRRELL
Patient

33 Penarwyn Road,
St. Blazey,
Par,
Cornwall.

REFERENCE

Daily Mail (1972). 7 August.

BOOK REVIEWS

Sir,

In your edition of July 1972, there is an unsigned book review on *Eighty years on call*, which is "for the most part anecdotal", describing the experiences of a doctor and his father before him in rural Wales. It is noted that the author republished letters which he has had published in the medical journals. The reviewer concludes "it is doubtful whether there is any real value in this".

Indeed, sir, we know that—and the author knows it too—but does your reviewer have to be so unnecessarily unkind in saying so? But to tar the reviewer with his own brush: what, pray, is "real value"?

The *Journal* reviews will do general practitioners

no credit, Sir, if they lack insight and compassion. Let's leave the nastiness to the hospital magazine.

ROBERT H. M. LEFEVER

2 Pelham Street,
London, SW7.

ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY

Sir,

Dr Norah Schuster's article about the Royal Humane Society was interesting, and specially to me, since Dr W. Hawes was a remote ancestor. We have a record in the family of some lines written by Dr Lettsom:

"When any sick to me apply,
I physics, bleeds and sweats 'em;
If after that they chance to die,
What's that to me? *I. Lettsom.*"

J. R. SCOTT

Cornwall House,
Cornwall Avenue,
Finchley,
London, N3.

REFERENCE

Schuster, Norah. (1971). *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, 21, 634-644.

Book Reviews

Sudden and unexpected deaths in infancy (cot deaths) (1972). Report of the Proceedings of the Sir Samuel Bedson Symposium held at Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge, 1970. Pp. 129 + xi. Bristol: John Wright & Sons Ltd. Price: £2.00.

Once in approximately every ten years the 'average' general practitioner in Britain will be confronted by a "sudden and unexpected death in infancy"—a "cot death". It is not an experience he will ever forget. For at each subsequent visit to the family he will find recreated for him, in some degree, the atmosphere of incredulity in which he examined a dead child of ten weeks old who—about nine hours or so previously—apparently healthy, had been settled down for the night by his parents. No sign of anoxia or struggle; no history of abnormality; a normal child of normal affectionate parents, lying normally in an undisturbed cot. But dead. The doctor will recall not only his total incapacity—and that of the coroner—to offer any explanation: but also his awareness of inadequacy at that moment in counselling the child's mother and father.

"As scientists", comments Wedgwood, "we may be more comfortable in studying the biological process, but we are negligent if we disregard the psychological and social implications of this disease". This monograph reports the proceedings